

## PREFACE

Few people today remain unaware of the rise of crime among our young people. Even the youngest of them are increasingly exposed to — if not directly involved in — unimaginable and unspeakable incidents. Those of us who believe there must be a way to alter the climate of violence that surrounds and engulfs our children have been hard at work creating and developing a variety of programs focusing on violence prevention. One of these programs is the Alternatives to Violence Project's (AVP) Youth Work.

The “work” has an interesting history. Borrowing from materials used in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's, the *Children's Creative Response to Conflict* created an approach to conflict resolution for use in New York City schools — initially for elementary students. In the mid-seventies these materials and others were used to develop an AVP workshop for use in prisons. Now in the 1990's, largely at the urging of inmates who wished they had learned more skills and alternatives when they were younger, workshops have been developed and are being offered to young people in a variety of settings.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Dear Reader,**

Welcome to AVP youth work! This manual has been written for people who have done the three levels of AVP workshops (Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators) and who wish to help facilitate AVP workshops for young people.

Usually workshops with a large proportion of young people are livelier than those involving only adults. Workshops that are set up with schools in “school time” often present challenges different from those offered in the general community. One thing is certain, workshops involving youth, as one facilitator put it, “aren't boring!”

This manual attempts to give you a taste of youth work. To appreciate the full flavor, as with any AVP endeavor, you must experience it! We hope these suggestions will be helpful as you prepare.

What follows may be read selectively. But if you read it all, the overall picture will be clearer.

### **So, Are Youth Workshops Unique?**

Yes and no (or, no and yes)!

The structure, style and general content of the workshop is pretty much the same as an adult workshop. The fundamental approach is still:

### **EXPERIENCE FIRST; DISCUSSION SECOND!**

But many youth have trouble handling lengthy discussions and long periods of sitting. Young people appreciate variety, movement and color (e.g., bright agendas and posters), and hands-on activities with physical “stuff.” In this manual some re-styling has been done to both agendas and exercises to better meet the needs of youth.